

Minister Downer of Australia and the chairman of the CTBT negotiating committee, Netherlands Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, for all the work they have done.

I'd also like to express my gratitude on behalf of our country to our Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament, Stephen Ledogar, along with the entire United States delegation. They worked very hard for the last 3 years to bring us to this happy day. I'm proud that our American leadership has played an important role in this success.

Now, together, the United States and the nations of the world have taken another giant step toward making our world safer. It is in that spirit that I will urge all nations to sign the agreement.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, there were three votes against—

The President. There were: the Indians, and Bhutan voting with India, and Libya. The Indians have some concerns which they have made clear in public, but now that we have voted overwhelmingly to do it, and when we sign it, then we'll have to work out the entry into force provisions. I am convinced we can do it, and I believe we can find a way for the Indians to have their security concerns met.

And so this is a big plus today. We're a lot closer today than we were yesterday toward realizing the dream of a comprehensive nuclear test ban.

Same Sex Marriage

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—same sex marriage bill passed today. Are you still going to sign it?

The President. Yes.

Q. Why?

The President. For the reason that I said all along—I said back in '92 that while I believe that gay partners can have certain contractual rights and other considerations, that the term marriage should not be applied in law. And this bill simply says that no State has to recognize any other State's law to that regard. So it's consistent with the position I took back in '92, and therefore I will sign it.

I will say again as I have repeatedly said, this should not be cause for any sort of discrimination or gay bashing, and I regret that the Senate failed by one vote to adopt the anti-discrimination bill with regard to employment discrimination, which I think is a very good bill. And we're so close, and I feel comfortable we'll be able to get it sometime in the near future.

Thank you.

Iraq

Q. [Inaudible]—Saddam Hussein—[inaudible]—

The President. Well, we don't have any independent confirmation of their allegation about firing the missiles. And again I will say I will take the position that I have taken from the day I took this office: We will evaluate them based on what they do, not what they say.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:14 p.m. at Kansas City International Airport, prior to his departure from Kansas City. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; President Jacques Chirac of France; President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; President Jiang Zemin of China; Foreign Minister Alexander Downer of Australia; and Jaap Ramaker, Netherlands Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Medicare Demonstration of Military Managed Care September 10, 1996

Today I am pleased to announce, on behalf of more than one million Medicare-eligible military retirees, a new demonstration that will expand health care options for our Nation's military retirees.

This initiative moves forward an idea—Medicare subvention, or Medicare reimbursement of Department of Defense health facilities—that the military retiree community has sought for many years. This administration first embraced

the concept of Medicare subvention 3 years ago under health reform. More recently, the administration moved the concept forward in a legislative proposal for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The demonstration I am announcing today, the “Medicare Demonstration of Military Managed Care,” is a partnership between the Departments of Health and Human Services and Defense that can generate multiple benefits: expanded health care options and improved access to military treatment facilities for Medicare-eligible military retirees; a better way for the Department of Defense to care for retired beneficiaries and support medical readiness; and savings for the Medicare Trust Fund by providing health care to Medicare-eligible military retirees at a lower cost in the DoD health care system.

Under this demonstration project, Medicare-eligible military retirees in five communities

could enroll in Defense’s new TRICARE Prime managed care system, and Medicare would reimburse DoD for these enrollees at a rate below what is traditionally paid to Medicare managed care plans. To protect the Medicare Trust Funds, Defense would receive Medicare payments only after meeting its current level of funding effort. The demonstration will test whether Medicare subvention is a cost-effective alternative for delivering accessible and quality care to dual-eligible beneficiaries.

We will submit legislation reflecting this agreement shortly. I am pleased that there is strong bipartisan support for this demonstration, and I look forward to working with Congress in quickly enacting enabling legislation this year.

We owe a great debt to those who have risked their lives defending our Nation. This agreement is an important step toward repaying that debt.

Statement on Signing the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 1997 *September 10, 1996*

I have signed into law, H.R. 3845, the “District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 1997.” This Act provides \$719 million in Federal appropriations for the District of Columbia.

The total amount of Federal funds appropriated to the District for FY 1997 includes \$660 million for the Federal payment to the District of Columbia, \$52 million for the Federal contribution to retirement funds, \$5.7 million for Presidential Inaugural expenses, and \$1 million to help address the District’s drinking water problem.

I am disappointed that the Congress has excluded the \$52 million increase in the Federal contribution to the pension payment proposed in my FY 1997 Budget. The \$52 million requested increase was intended to begin to address the District’s \$5 billion unfunded pension liability. I am committed to working with the Congress to develop a solution to address the District’s single largest financial obligation.

The Act sets the total operating expense spending level for the District of Columbia at

the requested level of \$5.1 billion, \$119 million above FY 1996.

The abortion language in the Act is the same as current law, which prohibits the use of both Federal and District funds to pay for abortions except in those cases where the life of the mother is in danger or in cases of rape or incest. I continue to view this prohibition as an unwarranted intrusion into the affairs of the District.

The Act includes a provision that applies civil rights standards provided for in Executive Order 11246 to Federal construction contracts funded under the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 10, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 3845, approved September 9, was assigned Public Law No. 104–194.